

V

AN EPILOGUE



by LEO STRAUSS

THE FOUR preceding essays deal with four particularly well-known manifestations of what one may call the new science of politics. That new approach to political things emerged shortly before World War I; it became preponderant and at the same time reached its mature or final form before, during, and after World War II. It need not be a product or a symptom of the crisis of the modern Western World—of a world which could boast of being distinguished by ever broadening freedom and humanitarianism; it is surely contemporary with that crisis.

The new political science shares with the most familiar ingredients of our world in its crisis the quality of being a mass phenomenon. That it is a mass phenomenon is compatible with the fact that it possesses its heights and its depths, the handful of opinion leaders, the men responsible for the breakthroughs on the top, and the many who drive on the highways projected by the former at the bottom. It wields very great authority in the West, above all in this country. It controls whole departments of political science in great and in large universities. It is supported by foundations of immense wealth with unbounded faith and unbelievably large grants. In spite of this, one runs little risk in taking issue with it. For its devotees are fettered by something like an Hippocratic oath to subordinate all considerations of safety, income, and deference to concern with the truth. The difficulty lies elsewhere. It is not easy to free one's mind from the impact of any apparently beneficent authority, for such freeing requires that one step outside of the circle warmed and charmed by the authority to be questioned. Yet it is necessary to make the effort. The new political science itself must demand it. One might say that precisely because the new political science is an authority operating within a democracy, it owes an account of itself to those who are subjected, or are to be subjected, to it. However sound it may be, it is a novelty. That it emerged so late is probably no accident: deep seated resistances had to be overcome step by step in a process of long duration. Precisely if the new political science constitutes the mature approach to political things, it presupposes the experience of the failure of earlier approaches. We ourselves no longer have that experience: George has had it for us. Yet to leave it at that is unbecoming to men of science; men of science cannot leave it at hearsay or at vague remembrances. To this one might reply that the resistances to the new political science have not entirely vanished: the old Adam is still alive. But precisely because this is so, the new political science, being a rational enterprise, must be able to lead the old Adam by a perfectly

lucid, coherent, and sound argument from his desert, which he mistakes for a paradise, to its own green pastures. It must cease to demand from us, in the posture of a noncommissioned officer, a clean and unmediated break with our previous habits, that is, with common sense; it must supply us with a ladder by which we can ascend, in full clarity as to what we are doing, from common sense to science. It must begin to learn to look with sympathy at the obstacles to it if it wishes to win the sympathy of the best men of the coming generation—those youths who possess the intellectual and the moral qualities which prevent men from simply following authorities, to say nothing of fashions.

The fairly recent change within political science has its parallels in the other social sciences. Yet the change within political science appears to be both more pronounced and more limited. The reason is that political science is the oldest of the social sciences and therefore willy-nilly a carrier of old traditions that resist innovation. Political science as we find it now consists of more heterogeneous parts than any other social science. "Public law" and "international law" were established themes centuries before "politics and parties" and "international relations," nay sociology, emerged. If we look around us, we may observe that the political science profession contains a strong minority of the right, consisting of the strict adherents of the new political science or the "behavioralists," a small minority of the left, consisting of those who reject the new political science root and branch, and a center consisting of the old-fashioned political scientists, men who are concerned with understanding political things without being much concerned with "methodological" questions but many of whom seem to have given custody of their "methodological" conscience to the strict adherents of the new political science and thus continue their old-fashioned practice with a somewhat uneasy conscience. It may seem strange that I called the strict adherents of the new political science the right wing and their intransigent opponents the left wing, seeing that the former are liberals almost to a man and the latter are in the odor of conservatism. Yet since I have heard the intransigent opponents of the new political science described as unorthodox, I inferred that the new political science is the orthodoxy in the profession, and the natural place of an orthodoxy is on the right.

A rigorous adherent of the new political science will dismiss the preceding remarks as quasi-statistical or sociological irrelevancies that have no bearing whatever on the only important issue, that issue being the soundness of the new political science. To state that issue means to bring out the fundamental difference between the new political science and the old. To avoid ambiguities, irrelevancies, and beatings around the bush, it is best to contrast the new political science directly with the "original" of the old, that is, with Aristotelian political science.

For Aristotle, political science is identical with political philosophy because

science is identical with philosophy. Science or philosophy consists of two kinds, theoretical and practical or political; theoretical science is subdivided into mathematics, physics (natural science), and metaphysics; practical science is subdivided into ethics, economics (management of the household), and political science in the narrower sense; logic does not belong to philosophy or science proper but is, as it were, the prelude to philosophy or science. The distinction between philosophy and science or the separation of science from philosophy was a consequence of the revolution which occurred in the seventeenth century. This revolution was primarily not the victory of Science over Metaphysics but what one may call the victory of the new philosophy or science over Aristotelian philosophy or science. Yet the new philosophy or science was not equally successful in all its parts. Its most successful part was physics (and mathematics). Prior to the victory of the new physics, there was not the science of physics simply: there was Aristotelian physics, Platonic physics, Epicurean physics, Stoic physics; to speak colloquially, there was no metaphysically neutral physics. The victory of the new physics led to the emergence of a physics which seemed to be as metaphysically neutral as, say, mathematics, medicine, or the art of shoemaking. The emergence of a metaphysically neutral physics made it possible for "science" to become independent of "philosophy," and in fact an authority for the latter. It paved the way for an economic science that is independent of ethics, for sociology as the study of non-political associations as not inferior in dignity to the political association, and, last but not least, for the separation of political science from political philosophy as well as the separation of economics and sociology from political science. Secondly, the Aristotelian distinction between theoretical and practical sciences implies that human action has principles of its own which are known independently of theoretical science (physics and metaphysics) and therefore that the practical sciences do not depend on the theoretical sciences or are not derivative from them. The principles of action are the natural ends of man toward which man is by nature inclined and of which he has by nature some awareness. This awareness is the necessary condition for his seeking and finding appropriate means for his ends, or for his becoming practically wise or prudent. Practical science, in contradistinction to practical wisdom itself, sets forth coherently the principles of action and the general rules of prudence ("proverbial wisdom"). Practical science raises questions that within practical or political experience, or at any rate on the basis of such experience, reveal themselves to be the most important questions and that are not stated, let alone answered, with sufficient clarity by practical wisdom itself. The sphere governed by prudence is then in principle self-sufficient or closed. Yet prudence is always endangered by false doctrines about the whole of which man is a part, by false theoretical opinions; prudence is therefore always in need of defense against such opinions, and that defense is necessarily theoretical. The theory defending prudence is mis-

understood, however, if it is taken to be the basis of prudence. This complication—the fact that the sphere of prudence is, as it were, only *de jure* but not *de facto* wholly independent of theoretical science—makes understandable, although it does not by itself justify, the view underlying the new political science according to which no awareness inherent in practice, and in general no natural awareness, is genuine knowledge, or in other words only “scientific” knowledge is genuine knowledge. This view implies that there cannot be practical sciences proper, or that the distinction between practical and theoretical sciences must be replaced by the distinction between theoretical and applied sciences—applied sciences being sciences based on theoretical sciences that precede the applied sciences in time and in order. It implies above all that the sciences dealing with human affairs are essentially dependent on the theoretical sciences—especially on psychology, which in the Aristotelian scheme is the highest theme of physics, not to say that it constitutes the transition from physics to metaphysics—or become themselves theoretical sciences to be supplemented by such applied sciences as the policy sciences or the sciences of social engineering. The new political science is then no longer based on political experience but on what is called scientific psychology. Thirdly, according to the Aristotelian view, the awareness of the principles of action shows itself primarily to a higher degree in public or authoritative speech, particularly in law and legislation, rather than in merely private speech. Hence Aristotelian political science views political things in the perspective of the citizen. Since there is of necessity a variety of citizen perspectives, the political scientist or political philosopher must become the umpire, the impartial judge; his perspective encompasses the partisan perspectives because he possesses a more comprehensive and a clearer grasp of man’s natural ends and their natural order than do the partisans. The new political science, on the other hand, looks at political things from without, in the perspective of the neutral observer, in the same perspective in which one would look at triangles or fish, although or because it may wish to become “manipulative”; it views human beings as an engineer would view materials for building bridges. It follows that the language of Aristotelian political science is identical with the language of political man; it hardly uses a term that did not originate in the market place and is not in common use there; but the new political science cannot begin to speak without having elaborated an extensive technical vocabulary. Fourthly, Aristotelian political science necessarily evaluates political things; the knowledge in which it culminates has the character of categorical advice and of exhortation. The new political science, on the other hand, conceives of the principles of action as “values” which are merely “subjective”; the knowledge it conveys has the character of prediction and only secondarily that of hypothetical advice. Fifthly, according to the Aristotelian view, man is a being *sui generis*, with a dignity of its own: man is the rational and political animal. Man is the only being that

can be concerned with self-respect; man can respect himself because he can despise himself; he is "the beast with red cheeks," the only being possessing a sense of shame. His dignity is then based on his awareness of what he ought to be or how he should live. Since there is a necessary connection between morality (how a man should live) and law, there is a necessary connection between the dignity of man and the dignity of the public order: the political is *sui generis* and cannot be understood as derivative from the sub-political. The presupposition of all this is that man is radically distinguished from non-man, from brutes as well as from gods, and this presupposition is ratified by common sense, by the citizen's understanding of things; when the citizen demands or rejects, say, "freedom from want for all," he does not mean freedom from want for tigers, rats, or lice. This presupposition points to a more fundamental presupposition according to which the whole consists of essentially different parts. The new political science, on the other hand, is based on the fundamental premise that there are no essential or irreducible differences: there are only differences of degree; in particular there is only a difference of degree between men and brutes or between men and robots. In other words, according to the new political science, or the universal science of which the new political science is a part, to understand a thing means to understand it in terms of its genesis or its conditions and hence, humanly speaking, to understand the higher in terms of the lower: the human in terms of the sub-human, the rational in terms of the sub-rational, the political in terms of the sub-political. In particular the new political science cannot admit that the common good is something that is.

Prior to the emergence of the new political science, political science had already moved very far from Aristotelian political science in the general direction of the new political science. Nevertheless it was accused of paying too much attention to the law or to the Ought, and of paying too little attention to the Is or to the actual behavior of men. For instance it seemed to be exclusively concerned with the legal arrangements regarding universal suffrage and its justification and not to consider at all how the universal right to vote is exercised; yet democracy as it is is characterized by the manner in which that right is exercised. We may grant that not so long ago there was a political science which was narrowly legalistic—which, for example, took the written constitution of the USSR very seriously—but we must add immediately that that error had been corrected, as it were in advance, by an older political science, the political science of Montesquieu, of Machiavelli, or of Aristotle himself. Besides, the new political science, in its justified protest against a merely legalistic political science, is in danger of disregarding the important things known to those legalists: "voting behavior" as it is now studied would be impossible if there were not in the first place the universal right to vote, and this right, even if not exercised by a large minority for very long periods, must be taken into consideration in any long-range

prediction since it may be exercised by all in future elections taking place in unprecedented and therefore particularly interesting circumstances. That right is an essential ingredient of democratic "behavior," for it partly explains "behavior" in democracies (for example, the prevention by force or fraud of certain people from voting). The new political science does not simply deny these things but it literally relegates them to the background, to "the habit background"; in so doing it puts the cart before the horse. Similar considerations apply, for instance, to the alleged discovery by the new political science of the importance of "propaganda"; that discovery is in fact only a partial rediscovery of the need for vulgar rhetoric, a need that had become somewhat obscured from a few generations which were comforted by faith in universal enlightenment as the inevitable by-product of the diffusion of science, which in its turn was thought to be the inevitable by-product of science. Generally speaking, one may wonder whether the new political science has brought to light anything of political importance which intelligent political practitioners with a deep knowledge of history, nay, intelligent and educated journalists, to say nothing of the old political science at its best, did not know at least as well beforehand. The main substantive reason, however, for the revolt against the old political science would seem to be the consideration that our political situation is entirely unprecedented and that it is unreasonable to expect earlier political thought to be of any help in coping with our situation; the unprecedented political situation calls for an unprecedented political science, perhaps for a judicious mating of dialectical materialism and psychoanalysis to be consummated on a bed supplied by logical positivism. Just as classical physics had to be superseded by nuclear physics so that the atomic age could come in via the atomic bomb, the old political science has to be superseded by a sort of nuclear political science so that we may be enabled to cope with the extreme dangers threatening atomic man; the equivalent in political science of the nuclei are probably the most minute events in the smallest groups of human beings, if not in the life of infants; the small groups in question are certainly not of the kind exemplified by the small group that Lenin gathered around himself in Switzerland during World War I. In making this comparison we are not oblivious of the fact that the nuclear physicists show a greater respect for classical physics than the nuclear political scientists show for classical politics. Nor do we forget that, while the nuclei proper are simply prior to macrophysical phenomena, the "political" nuclei, which are meant to supply explanations for the political things proper, are already molded, nay constituted by the political order or the regime within which they occur: an American small group is not a Russian small group. We may grant that our political situation has nothing in common with any earlier political situation except that it is a political situation. The human race is still divided into a number of the kind of societies that we have come to call states and that are separated from one another by unmis-

takable and sometimes formidable frontiers. Those states still differ from one another not only in all conceivable other respects but above all in their regimes and hence in the things to which the preponderant part of each society is dedicated or in the spirit which more or less effectively pervades each society. These societies have very different images of the future so that for all of them to live together, in contradistinction to uneasily coexisting, is altogether impossible. Each of them receiving its character from its regime is still in need of specific measures for preserving itself and its regime and hence is uncertain of its future. Acting willy-nilly through their governments (which may be governments in exile), these societies still move as if on an uncharted sea and surely without the benefit of tracks toward a future that is veiled from everyone and which is pregnant with surprises. Their governments still try to determine the future of their societies with the help partly of knowledge, partly of guesses, the recourse to guesses still being partly necessitated by the secrecy in which their most important opponents shroud their most important plans or projects. The new political science which is so eager to predict is, as it admits, as unable to predict the outcome of the unprecedented conflict peculiar to our age as the crudest soothsayer of the most benighted tribe. In former times people thought that the outcome of serious conflicts is unpredictable because one cannot know how long this or that outstanding leader in war or counsel will live, or how the opposed armies will act in the test of battle or similar things. We have been brought to believe that chance can be controlled or does not seriously affect the fate of societies. Yet the science that is said to have rendered possible the control of chance has itself become the refuge of chance: man's fate depends now more than ever on science or technology, hence on discoveries or inventions, hence on events whose precise occurrence is by their very nature not predictable. A simply unprecedented political situation would be a situation of no political interest, that is, not a political situation. Now if the essential character of all political situations was grasped by the old political science, there seems to be no reason why it must be superseded by a new political science. In case the new political science should tend to understand political things in non-political terms, the old political science, wise to many ages, would even be superior to the new political science in helping us to find our bearings in our unprecedented situation in spite or rather because of the fact that only the new political science can boast of being the child of the atomic age.

But one will never understand the new political science if one does not start from that reason advanced on its behalf which has nothing whatever to do with any true or alleged blindness of the old political science to any political things as such. That reason is a general notion of science. According to that notion, only scientific knowledge is genuine knowledge. From this it follows immediately that all awareness of political things that is not scien-

tific is cognitively worthless. Serious criticism of the old political science is a waste of time; for we know in advance that it could only have been a pseudo science, although perhaps including a few remarkably shrewd hunches. This is not to deny that the adherents of the new political science sometimes engage in apparent criticism of the old, but that criticism is characterized by a constitutional inability to understand the criticized doctrines on their own terms. What science is, is supposed to be known from the practice of the other sciences, of sciences that are admittedly in existence and not mere desiderata, and the clearest examples of such sciences are the natural sciences. What science is, is supposed to be known, above all, from the science of science, that is, logic. The basis of the new political science then is logic, that is, a particular kind of logic; the logic in question is not, for instance, Aristotelian or Kantian or Hegelian logic. This means, however, that the new political science rests on what for the political scientist as such is a mere assumption that he is not competent to judge on its own terms, namely, as a logical theory, for that theory is controversial among the people who must be supposed to be competent in such matters, the professors of philosophy. The political scientist is competent, however, to judge it by its fruits; he is competent to judge whether his understanding of political things as political things is helped or hindered by the new political science that derives from the logic in question. He is perfectly justified in regarding as an imposition the demand that he comply with "logical positivism" or else plead guilty to being a "metaphysician." He is perfectly justified in regarding this epithet as not "objective," because it is terrifying and unintelligible like the war cries of savages.

What strikes a sympathetic chord in every political scientist is less the demand that he proceed "scientifically"—for mathematics also proceeds scientifically and political science surely is not a mathematical discipline—than the demand that he proceed "empirically." This is a demand of common sense. No one in his senses ever dreamt that he could know anything, say, of American government as such or of the present political situation as such except by looking at American government or at the present political situation. The incarnation of the empirical spirit is the man from Missouri, who has to be shown. For he knows that he, as well as everyone else who is of sound mind and whose sight is not defective, can see things and people as they are with his eyes, and that he is capable of knowing how his neighbors feel; he takes it for granted that he lives with other human beings of all descriptions in the same world and that because they are all human beings, they all understand one another somehow; he knows that if this were not so, political life would be altogether impossible. If someone offered him speculations based on extrasensory perception, he would turn his back more or less politely. The old political science would not quarrel in these respects with the man from Missouri. It did not claim to know better or differently than

he such things as that the Democratic and Republican parties are now, and have been for some time, the preponderant parties in this country, and that there are presidential elections every fourth year. By admitting that facts of this kind are known independently of political science, it admitted that empirical knowledge is not necessarily scientific knowledge or that a statement can be true and known to be true without being scientific, and, above all, that political science stands or falls by the truth of the pre-scientific awareness of political things. Yet one may raise the question of how one can be certain of the truth of empirical statements that are pre-scientific. If we call an elaborate answer to this question an epistemology, we may say that an empiricist, in contradistinction to an empirical, statement is based on the explicit assumption of a specific epistemology. Yet every epistemology presupposes the truth of empirical statements. Our perceiving things and people is more manifest and more reliable than any "theory of knowledge"—any explanation of how our perceiving things and people is possible—can be; the truth of any "theory of knowledge" depends on its ability to give an adequate account of this fundamental reliance. If a logical positivist tries to give an account of a "thing" or a formula for a "thing" in terms of mere sense data and their composition, he is looking, and bids us to look, at the previously grasped "thing"; the previously grasped "thing" is the standard by which we judge his formula. If an epistemology, for example solipsism, manifestly fails to give an account of how empirical statements as meant can be true, it fails to carry conviction. To be aware of the necessity of the fundamental reliance that underlies or pervades all empirical statements means to recognize the fundamental riddle, not to have solved it. But no man needs to be ashamed to admit that he does not possess a solution to the fundamental riddle. Surely no man ought to let himself be bullied into the acceptance of an alleged solution—for the denial of the existence of a riddle is a kind of solution of the riddle—by the threat that if he fails to do so he is a "metaphysician." To sustain our weaker brethren against that threat, one might tell them that the belief accepted by the empiricists, according to which science is in principle susceptible of infinite progress, is itself tantamount to the belief that being is irretrievably mysterious.

Let us try to restate the issue by returning first to our man from Missouri. A simple observation seems to be sufficient to show that the man from Missouri is "naïve": he does not see things with his eyes; what he sees with his eyes are only colors, shapes, and the like; he would perceive "things," in contradistinction to "sense data," only if he possessed "extrasensory perception"; his claim—the claim of common sense—implies that there is "extrasensory perception." What is true of "things," is true of "patterns," at any rate of those patterns which students of politics from time to time claim to "perceive." We must leave the man from Missouri scratching his head; by being silent, he remains in his way a philosopher. But others do not leave it

at scratching their heads. Transforming themselves from devotees of *empeiria* into empiricists, they contend that what is perceived or "given" is only sense data; the "thing" emerges by virtue of unconscious or conscious "construction"; the "things" which to common sense present themselves as "given" are in truth constructs. Common sense understanding is understanding by means of unconscious construction; scientific understanding is understanding by means of conscious construction. Somewhat more precisely, common sense understanding is understanding in terms of "things possessing qualities"; scientific understanding is understanding in terms of "functional relations between different series of events." Unconscious constructs are ill-made, for their making is affected by all sorts of purely "subjective" influences; only conscious constructs can be well-made, perfectly lucid, in every respect the same for everyone, or "objective." Still, one says with greater right that we perceive things than that we perceive human beings as human beings, for at least some of the properties which we ascribe to things are sensually perceived, whereas the soul's actions, passions, or states can never become sense data. Now, that understanding of things and human beings which is rejected by empiricism is the understanding by which political life, political understanding, political experience stand or fall. Hence, the new political science, based as it is on empiricism, must reject the results of political understanding and political experience as such, and since the political things are given to us in political understanding and political experience, the new political science cannot be helpful for the deeper understanding of political things: it must reduce the political things to non-political data. The new political science comes into being through an attempted break with common sense. But that break cannot be consistently carried out, as can be seen in a general way from the following consideration. Empiricism cannot be established empiricistically: it is not known through sense data that the only possible objects of perception are sense data. If one tries therefore to establish empiricism empirically, one must make use of that understanding of things which empiricism renders doubtful: the relation of eyes to colors or shapes is established through the same kind of perception through which we perceive things as things rather than sense data or constructs. In other words, sense data as sense data become known only through an act of abstraction or disregard which presupposes the legitimacy of our primary awareness of things as things and of people as people. Hence, the only way of overcoming the naïveté of the man from Missouri is in the first place to admit that that naïveté cannot be avoided in any way or that there is no possible human thought which is not in the last analysis dependent on the legitimacy of that naïveté and the awareness or the knowledge going with it.

We must not disregard the most massive or the crudest reason to which empiricism owes much of its attractiveness. Some adherents of the new political science would argue as follows: One cannot indeed reasonably deny

that pre-scientific thought about political things contains genuine knowledge; but the trouble is that within pre-scientific political thought, genuine knowledge of political things is inseparable from prejudices or superstitions; hence one cannot get rid of the spurious elements in pre-scientific political thought except by breaking altogether with pre-scientific thought or by acting on the assumption that pre-scientific thought does not have the character of knowledge at all. Common sense contains genuine knowledge of broomsticks; but the trouble is that this knowledge has in common sense the same status as the alleged knowledge concerning witches; by trusting common sense one is in danger of bringing back the whole kingdom of darkness with Thomas Aquinas at its head. The old political science was not unaware of the imperfections of political opinion, but it did not believe that the remedy lies in the total rejection of common sense understanding as such. It was critical in the original sense, that is, discerning, regarding political opinion. It was aware that the errors regarding witches were found out without the benefit of empiricism. It was aware that judgments or maxims which were justified by the uncontested experience of decades, and even of centuries, or millennia, may have to be revised because of unforeseen changes; it knew, in the words of Burke, "that the generality of people are fifty years, at least, behind hand in their politics." Accordingly, the old political science was concerned with political improvement by political means as distinguished from social engineering; it knew that those political means include revolutions and also wars, since there may be foreign regimes (Hitler Germany is the orthodox example) that are dangerous to the free survival of this country, regimes that would be expected to transform themselves gradually into good neighbors only by the criminally foolish.

Acceptance of the distinctive premises of the new political science leads to the consequences which have been sufficiently illustrated in the four preceding essays. In the first place, the new political science is constantly compelled to borrow from common sense knowledge, thus unwittingly testifying to the truth that there is genuine pre-scientific knowledge of political things which is the basis of all scientific knowledge of them.¹ Secondly, the logic on which the new political science is based may provide sufficient criteria of exactness; it does not provide objective criteria of relevance.² Criteria of relevance are inherent in the pre-scientific understanding of political things; intelligent and informed citizens distinguish soundly between important and unimportant political matters. Political men are concerned with what is to be done politically here and now in accordance with principles of preference of which they are aware, although not necessarily in an adequate manner; it is those principles of preference which supply the criteria of relevance in regard to political things. Ordinarily a political man must at least pretend to "look

¹ See above, pp. 21, 46, 76, 85, 124 ff, 193, 214-217.

² See above, pp. 37, 55-57, 144 ff, 172-173, 177-178, 186-188.

up" to something that at least the preponderant part of his society looks up to. That which at least everyone who counts politically is supposed to look up to, that which is politically the highest, gives a society its character; it constitutes and justifies the regime of the society in question. The "highest" is that through which a society is "a whole," a distinct whole with a character of its own, just as for common sense "the world" is a whole by being overarched by heaven of which one cannot be aware except by "looking up." There is obviously, and for cause, a variety of regimes and hence of what is regarded as the politically highest, that is, of the purposes to which the various regimes are dedicated. The qualitatively different regimes, or kinds of regimes, and the qualitatively different purposes constituting and legitimating them, then, by revealing themselves as the most important political things, supply the key to the understanding of all political things and the basis for the reasoned distinction between important and unimportant political things. The regimes and their principles pervade the societies throughout, in the sense that there are no recesses of privacy which are simply impervious to that pervasion as is indicated by such expressions, coined by the new political science, as "the democratic personality." Nevertheless, there are political things that are not affected by the difference of regimes. In a society which cannot survive without an irrigation system, every regime will have to preserve that system intact. Every regime must try to preserve itself against subversion by means of force. There are both technical things and politically neutral things (things that are common to all regimes) that are necessarily the concern of political deliberation without ever being as such politically controversial. The preceding remarks are a very rough sketch of the view of political things that was characteristic of the old political science. According to that view, what is most important for political science is identical with what is most important politically. To illustrate this by a present-day example, for the old-fashioned political scientists today, the most important concern is the Cold War or the qualitative difference, which amounts to a conflict, between liberal democracy and communism.

The break with the common sense understanding of political things compels the new political science to abandon the criteria of relevance that are inherent in political understanding. Hence, the new political science lacks orientation regarding political things; it has no protection whatever, except by surreptitious recourse to common sense, against losing itself in the study of irrelevancies. It is confronted by a chaotic mass of data into which it must bring an order alien to those data, an order originating in the demands of political science as a science anxious to comply with the demands of logical positivism. The universals in the light of which the old political science viewed the political phenomena (the various regimes and their purposes) must be replaced by a different kind of universals. The first step toward the finding of the new kind of universals may be said to take this form: what is

equally present in all regimes (the politically neutral) must be the key to the different regimes (the political proper, the essentially controversial); what is equally present in all regimes is, say, coercion and freedom; the scientific analysis of a given regime will then indicate exactly—in terms of percentages—the amount of coercion and the amount of freedom peculiar to it. That is to say, as political scientists we must express the political phenomena par excellence, the essential differences or the heterogeneity of regimes, in terms of the homogeneous elements which pervade all regimes. What is important for us as political scientists is not the politically important. Yet we cannot forever remain blind to the fact that what claims to be a purely scientific or theoretical enterprise has grave political consequences—consequences which are so little accidental that they appeal for their own sake to the new political scientists: everyone knows what follows from the demonstration, which presupposes the begging of all important questions, that there is only a difference of degree between liberal democracy and communism in regard to coercion and freedom. The *Is* necessarily leads to an *Ought*, all sincere protestations to the contrary notwithstanding. The second step toward the finding of the new kind of universals consists in the following reasoning: all political societies, whatever their regimes, surely are groups of some kind; hence, the key to the understanding of political things must be a theory of groups in general.³ Groups must have some cohesion and groups change; we are then in need of a universal theory which tells us why or how groups cohere and why or how they change. Seeking for those why's or how's we shall discover *n* factors and *m* modes of their interaction. The result of this reduction of the political to the sociological—a reduction that, it is claimed, will make our understanding of political things more “realistic”—is in fact a formalism unrivaled in any scholasticism of the past. All peculiarities of political societies, and still more of the political societies with which we are concerned as citizens, become unrecognizable if restated in terms of the vague generalities which hold of every conceivable group; at the end of the dreary and boring process we understand what we are interested in not more but less than we understood it at the beginning. What in political language are called the rulers and the ruled (to say nothing of oppressors and oppressed) become through this process nothing but different parts of a social system, of a mechanism, each part acting on the other and being acted upon by it; there may be a stronger part but there cannot be a ruling part; the relation of parts of a mechanism supersedes the political relation.⁴ We need not dwell on the next, but not necessarily last, step of the reasoning which we are trying to sketch, namely, the requirement that the researches regarding groups must be underpinned, nay, guided by “a general theory of personality” or the like: we know nothing of the political wisdom or the folly of a statesman's

³ See above, pp. 153 ff.

⁴ See above, pp. 35-36, 53-54, 197, 222.

actions until we know everything about the degree of affection which he received from each of his parents, if any.⁵ The last step might be thought to be the use by the new political science of observations regarding rats: can we not observe human beings as we observe rats, are decisions which rats make not much simpler than the decisions which humans frequently make, and is not the simpler always the key to the more complex? ⁶ We do not doubt that we can observe, if we try hard enough, the overt behavior of humans as we observe the overt behavior of rats. But we ought not to forget that in the case of rats we are limited to observing overt behavior because they do not talk, and they do not talk because they have nothing to say or because they have no inwardness. Yet to return from these depths to the surface, an important example of the formalism in question is supplied by the well-known theory regarding the principles of legitimacy which substitutes formal characteristics (traditional, rational, charismatic) for the substantive principles which are precisely the purposes to which the various regimes are dedicated and by which they are legitimated. The universals for which the new political science seeks are "laws of human behavior"; those laws are to be discovered by means of "empirical" research. There is an amazing disproportion between the apparent breadth of the goal (say, a general theory of social change) and the true pettiness of the researches undertaken to achieve that goal (say, a change in a hospital when one head nurse is replaced by another). This is no accident. Since we lack objective criteria of relevance, we have no reason to be more interested in a world-shaking revolution that affects directly or indirectly all men than in the most trifling "social changes." Moreover, if the laws sought are to be "laws of human behavior" they cannot be restricted to human behavior as it is affected by this or that regime. But human behavior as studied by "empirical" research always occurs within a peculiar regime. More precisely, the most cherished techniques of "empirical" research in the social sciences can be applied only to human beings living now in countries in which the governments tolerate research of this kind. The new political science is therefore constantly tempted (and as a rule it does not resist that temptation) to absolutize the relative or peculiar, that is, to be parochial. We have read statements about "the revolutionary" or "the conservative" which did not even claim to have any basis other than observations made in the United States at the present moment; if those statements had any relation to facts at all, they might have some degree of truth regarding revolutionaries or conservatives in certain parts of the United States today, but they reveal themselves immediately as patently wrong if taken as they were meant—as descriptions of the revolutionary or the conservative as such; the error in question was due to the parochialism inevitably fostered by the new political science.

⁵ See above, pp. 22 ff, 263 ff.

⁶ See above, pp. 113-115.

At the risk of some repetition, we must say a few words about the language of the new political science. The break with the political understanding of political things necessitates the making of a language different from the language used by political men. The new political science rejects the latter language as ambiguous and imprecise and claims that its own language is unambiguous and precise. Yet this claim is not warranted. The language of the new political science is not less vague but more vague than the language used in political life. Political life would be altogether impossible if its language were unqualifiedly vague; that language is capable of the utmost unambiguity and precision, as in a declaration of war or in an order given to a firing squad. If available distinctions like that between war, peace, and armistice prove to be insufficient, political life finds, without the benefit of political science, the right new expression (Cold War as distinguished from Hot or Shooting War) that designates the new phenomenon with unfailing precision. The alleged vagueness of political language is primarily due to the fact that it corresponds to the complexity of political life, or that it is nourished by long experience with political things in a great variety of circumstances. By simply condemning pre-scientific language, instead of deviating from usage in particular cases because of the proven inadequacy of usage in the cases in question, one simply condemns oneself to unredeemable vagueness. No thoughtful citizen would dream of equating politics with something as vague and empty as "power" or "power relations." The thinking men who are regarded as the classic interpreters of power, Thucydides and Machiavelli, did not need these expressions; these expressions as now used originate, not in political life, but in the academic reaction to the understanding of political life in terms of law alone: these expressions signify nothing but that academic reaction. Political language does not claim to be perfectly clear and distinct; it does not claim to be based on a full understanding of the things which it designates unambiguously enough; it is suggestive: it leaves those things in the penumbra in which they come to sight. The purge effected by "scientific" definitions of those things has the character of sterilization. The language of the new political science claims to be perfectly clear and distinct and, at the same time, entirely provisional; its terms are meant to imply hypotheses about political life. But this claim to undogmatic openness is a mere ceremonial gesture. When one speaks of "conscience" one does not claim to have fathomed the phenomenon indicated by that term. But when the new political scientist speaks of the "Superego," he is certain that anything meant by "conscience" which is not covered by the "Superego" is a superstition. As a consequence he cannot distinguish between a bad conscience which may induce a man to devote the rest of his life to compensating another man to the best of his powers for an irreparable damage and "guilt feelings" which one ought to get rid of as fast and as cheaply as possible. Similarly he is certain to have understood

the trust which induces people to vote for a candidate to high office by speaking of the "father image"; he does not have to inquire whether and to what extent the candidate in question deserves that trust—a trust different from the trust which children have in their father. The allegedly provisional or hypothetical terms are never questioned in the process of research, for their implications channel the research in such directions that the "data" which might reveal the inadequacy of the hypotheses never turn up. We conclude that to the extent to which the new political science is not formalistic, it is vulgarian. This vulgarianism shows itself particularly in the "value-free" manner in which it uses and thus debases terms that originally were meant only for indicating things of a noble character—terms like "culture," "personality," "values," "charismatic" and "civilization."

The most important example of the dogmatism to which we have alluded is supplied by the treatment of religion in the new political or social science. The new science uses sociological or psychological theories regarding religion which exclude, without considering, the possibility that religion rests ultimately on God's revealing Himself to man; hence those theories are mere hypotheses which can never be confirmed. Those theories are in fact the hidden basis of the new science. The new science rests on a dogmatic atheism which presents itself as merely methodological or hypothetical. For a few years, logical positivism tried with much noise and little thought to dispose of religion by asserting that religious assertions are "meaningless statements." This trick seems to have been abandoned without noise. Some adherents of the new political science might rejoin with some liveliness that their posture toward religion is imposed on them by intellectual honesty: not being able to believe, they cannot accept belief as the basis of their science. We gladly grant that, other things being equal, a frank atheist is a better man than an alleged theist who conceives of God as a symbol. But we must add that intellectual honesty is not enough. Intellectual honesty is not love of truth. Intellectual honesty, a kind of self-denial, has taken the place of love of truth because truth has come to be believed to be repulsive and one cannot love the repulsive. Yet just as our opponents refuse respect to unreasoned belief, we on our part, with at least equal right, must refuse respect to unreasoned unbelief; honesty with oneself regarding one's unbelief is in itself not more than unreasoned unbelief probably accompanied by a vague confidence that the issue of unbelief versus belief has long since been settled once and for all. It is hardly necessary to add that the dogmatic exclusion of religious awareness proper renders questionable all long-range predictions concerning the future of societies.

The reduction of the political to the sub-political is the reduction of primarily given wholes to elements which are relatively simple, that is, sufficiently simple for the research purpose at hand yet necessarily susceptible of being analyzed into still simpler elements *in infinitum*. It implies that there cannot

be genuine wholes. Hence it implies that there cannot be a common good. According to the old political science, there is necessarily a common good, and the common good in its fullness is the good society and what is required for the good society. The consistent denial of the common good is as impossible as every other consistent manifestation of the break with common sense. The empiricists who reject the notion of wholes are compelled to speak sooner or later of such things as "the open society," which is their definition of the good society.⁷ The alternative (if it is an alternative) is to deny the possibility of a substantive public interest but to admit the possibility of substantive group interests; yet it is not difficult to see that what is granted to the goose, "the group," cannot be consistently denied to the gander, "the country."⁸ In accordance with this, the new political science surreptitiously reintroduces the common good in the form of "the rules of the game" with which all conflicting groups are supposed to comply because those rules, reasonably fair to every group, can reasonably be admitted by every group.⁹ The "group politics" approach is a relic of Marxism, which more reasonably denied that there can be a common good in a society consisting of classes that are locked in a life and death struggle overt or hidden, and therefore found the common good in a classless and hence stateless society comprising the whole human race. The consistent denial of the common good requires a radical "individualism." In fact, the new political science appears to teach that there cannot be a substantive public interest because there is not, and cannot be, a single objective approved by all members of society: murderers show by their action that not even the prohibition against murder is, strictly speaking, to the public interest. We are not so sure whether the murderer wishes that murder cease to be a punishable action or rather that he himself get away with murder. Be this as it may, this denial of the common good is based on the premise that even if an objective is to the interest of the overwhelming majority, it is not to the interest of all: no minority however small, no individual however perverse must be left out. More precisely, even if an objective is to the interest of all but not believed by all to be to the interest of all, it is not to the public interest: everyone is by nature the sole judge of what is to his interest; his judgment regarding his interest is not subject to anybody else's examination on the issue whether his judgment is sound. This premise is not the discovery or invention of the new political science; it was stated with the greatest vigor by Hobbes, who opposed it to the opposite premise which had been the basis of the old political science proper. But Hobbes still saw that his premise entails the war of everybody against everybody and hence drew the conclusion that everyone must cease to be the sole judge of what is to his interest if there is to be human life; the individual's

⁷ See above, pp. 44-55, 103-105, 217 ff.

⁸ See above, pp. 195 ff, esp. 202-203.

⁹ See above, pp. 198-199.

reason must give way to the public reason. The new political science denies in a way that there is a public reason: government may be a broker, if a broker possessing "the monopoly of violence," but it surely is not the public reason. The true public reason is the new political science, which judges in a universally valid, or objective, manner what is to the interest of each, for it shows to everyone what means he must choose to attain his attainable ends, whatever those ends may be. It has been shown earlier in this volume what becomes of the new political science, or of the only kind of rationality which the new political science still admits, if its Hobbian premise is not conveniently forgotten: the new form of public reason goes the way of the old.¹⁰

The denial of the common good presents itself today as a direct consequence of the distinction between facts and values according to which only factual judgments, not value judgments, can be true or objective. The new political science leaves the justification of values or of preferences to "political philosophy" or, more precisely, to ideology on the ground that any justification of preferences would have to derive values from facts and such derivation is not legitimately possible. Preferences are not strictly speaking opinions and hence cannot be true or false, whereas ideologies are opinions and, for the reason given, false opinions. Whereas acting man has necessarily chosen values, the new political scientist as pure spectator is not committed to any value; in particular, he is neutral in the conflict between liberal democracy and its enemies. The traditional value systems antedate the awareness of the difference between facts and values; they claimed to be derived from facts—from Divine Revelation or from similar sources, in general from superior or perfect beings which as such unite in themselves fact and value; the discovery of the difference between facts and values amounts therefore to a refutation of the traditional value systems as originally meant. It is at least doubtful whether those value systems can be divorced from what present themselves as their factual bases. At any rate, it follows from the difference between facts and values that men can live without ideology: they can adopt, posit, or proclaim values without making the illegitimate attempt to derive their values from facts or without relying on false or at least unevident assertions regarding what is. One thus arrives at the notion of the rational society or of the non-ideological regime: a society that is based on the understanding of the character of values. Since this understanding implies that before the tribunal of reason all values are equal, the rational society will be egalitarian or democratic and permissive or liberal: the rational doctrine regarding the difference between facts and values rationally justifies the preference for liberal democracy—contrary to what is intended by that distinction itself. In other words, whereas the new political science ought to deny the proposition that there can be no society without an ideology, it asserts that proposition.

¹⁰ Cf. Simon and Lasswell, above, pp. 108-109, 296-300.

One is thus led to wonder whether the distinction between facts and values, or the assertion that no Ought can be derived from an Is, is well founded. Let us assume that a man's "values" (that is, what he values) are fully determined by his heredity and environment, that is, by his Is, or that there is a one-to-one relation between value *a* and Is *A*. In this case the Ought would be determined by the Is or derivative from it. But the very issue as commonly understood presupposes that this assumption is wrong: man possesses a certain latitude; he can choose not only from among various ways of overt behavior (like jumping or not jumping into a river to escape death at the hands of a stronger enemy who may or may not be able to swim) but from among various values; this latitude, this possibility has the character of a fact. A man lacking this latitude—for example, a man for whom every stimulus is a value or who cannot help giving in to every desire—is a defective man, a man with whom something is wrong. The fact that someone desires something does not yet make that something his value; he may successfully fight his desire or if his desire overpowers him he may blame himself for this as for a failure on his part; only choice, in contradistinction to mere desire, makes something a man's value. The distinction between desire and choice is a distinction among facts. Choice does not mean here the choice of means to pre-given ends; choice here means the choice of ends, the positing of ends or, rather, of values. Man is then understood as a being which differs from all other known beings because it posits values; this positing is taken to be a fact. In accordance with this, the new political science denies that man has natural ends—ends toward which he is by nature inclined; it denies more specifically the premise of modern natural right, according to which self-preservation is the most important natural end: man can choose death in preference to life, not only in a given situation, out of despair, but simply: he can posit death as his value. The view that the pertinent Is is our positing of values, in contradistinction to the yielding to mere desires, necessarily leads to Oughts of a radically different character from the so-called Oughts corresponding to mere desires. We conclude that the "relativism" accepted by the new political science according to which values are nothing but objects of desire is based on an insufficient analysis of the Is, that is, of the pertinent Is; and, furthermore, that one's opinion regarding the character of the Is settles one's opinion regarding the character of the Ought. We must leave it open here whether a more adequate analysis of the pertinent Is, that is, of the nature of man, does not lead to a more adequate determination of the Ought or beyond a merely formal characterization of the Ought. At any rate, if a man is of the opinion that as a matter of fact all desires are of equal dignity since we know of no factual consideration which would entitle us to assign different dignities to different desires, he cannot but be of the opinion—unless he is prepared to become guilty of gross arbitrariness—that all desires

ought to be treated as equal within the limits of the possible, and this opinion is what is meant by permissive egalitarianism.

There is then more than a mysterious pre-established harmony between the new political science and a particular version of liberal democracy. The alleged value-free analysis of political phenomena is controlled by an unavowed commitment built into the new political science to that version of liberal democracy. That version of liberal democracy is not discussed openly and impartially, with full consideration of all relevant pros and cons. We call this characteristic of the new political science its democratism. The new political science looks for laws of human behavior to be discovered by means of data supplied through certain techniques of research which are believed to guarantee the maximum of objectivity; it therefore puts a premium on the study of things which occur frequently now in democratic societies: neither those in their graves nor those behind the Curtains can respond to questionnaires or to interviews. Democracy is then the tacit presupposition of the data; it does not have to become a theme; it can easily be forgotten: the wood is forgotten for the trees; the laws of human behavior are in fact laws of the behavior of human beings more or less molded by democracy; man is tacitly identified with democratic man. The new political science puts a premium on observations which can be made with the utmost frequency, and therefore by people of the meanest capacities. Thus it frequently culminates in observations made by people who are not intelligent about people who are not intelligent. While the new political science becomes ever less able to see democracy or to hold a mirror to democracy, it ever more reflects the most dangerous proclivities of democracy. It even strengthens those proclivities. By teaching in effect the equality of literally all desires, it teaches in effect that there is nothing that a man ought to be ashamed of; by destroying the possibility of self-contempt, it destroys, with the best of intentions, the possibility of self-respect. By teaching the equality of all values, by denying that there are things which are intrinsically high and others which are intrinsically low as well as by denying that there is an essential difference between men and brutes, it unwittingly contributes to the victory of the gutter. Yet this same new political science came into being through the revolt against what one may call the democratic orthodoxy of the immediate past. It had learned certain lessons which were hard for that orthodoxy to swallow regarding the irrationality of the masses and the necessity of elites; if it had been wise it would have learned those lessons from the galaxy of anti-democratic thinkers of the remote past. It believed that it had learned in other words that, contrary to the belief of the orthodox democrats, no compelling case can be made for liberalism (for example, for the unqualified freedom of such speech as does not constitute a clear and present danger) nor for democracy (free elections based on universal suffrage). But it succeeded in reconciling those doubts with the unfaltering commitment to liberal democracy by the simple

device of declaring that no value judgments, including those supporting liberal democracy, are rational, and hence that an iron-clad argument in favor of liberal democracy ought in reason not even to be expected. The very complex pros and cons regarding liberal democracy have thus become entirely obliterated by the poorest formalism. The crisis of liberal democracy has become concealed by a ritual which calls itself methodology or logic. This almost willful blindness to the crisis of liberal democracy is part of that crisis. No wonder then that the new political science has nothing to say against those who unhesitatingly prefer surrender, that is, the abandonment of liberal democracy, to war.

Only a great fool would call the new political science diabolic: it has no attributes peculiar to fallen angels. It is not even Machiavellian, for Machiavelli's teaching was graceful, subtle, and colorful. Nor is it Neronian. Nevertheless one may say of it that it fiddles while Rome burns. It is excused by two facts: it does not know that it fiddles, and it does not know that Rome burns.